

[Print this page](#)

## Drivers need calming devices

16dec04

ANDREW Leigh (Opinion, 15/12) may very well believe that pre-licence training and post-licence training are both useless when it comes to reducing road fatalities among young drivers.

But then he suggests that traffic calming devices may be more effective.

It's driver calming devices that we really need if testosterone and a lack of ability to sensibly gauge risks are two of the major factors behind youth road deaths.

My experience is that an advanced driving course can go a long way towards calming driver behaviour.

There is simply nothing as effective as learning you're not always capable of controlling a car to make you more careful about driving one.

Discovering that in a controlled and supervised environment is preferable to finding it out against a tree, another car or a pedestrian.

A stretch of road, with a speed limit of 100 km/h, might be perfectly safe in daylight on a dry day, but may be lethal to an inexperienced driver at night when it's raining.

What possible traffic calming device is there that is appropriate to both conditions?

**Simon Hoyle**

Mosman, NSW

As a former director of the RACV, I must commend all governments for their partnership in developing the new safer driving program announced this week.

If they can couple it with forcing car manufacturers to build safer cars and cut out their pathetic ads based on speed, then we have a winner.

But why wait until 2007? Why not start next year? And how about compulsory driver

education in all secondary schools? How about getting teachers trained in traffic safety education? Could we see the fabulous Keys Please program in Victoria expanded?

Will police be given power to get even tougher on hoons? I could go on, not to detract from a great idea but to add to it.

Safer driving needs to be instilled into everyone from drivers to car sellers to car makers to law makers.

**Ange Kenos**

Niddrie, Vic

ANDREW Leigh may have oversimplified the significance of the results of the Cochrane review. The review does not discuss educational methods in detail, but the majority of the studies used either correspondence or class instruction, methods that might be considered ineffective in the learning of practical skills.

The Cochrane collection also contains a review of graduated driver licensing, also published in 2004, that concluded that graduated driver licensing "is effective in reducing the crash rates of young drivers", although the reviewers were not able to identify which aspects of the programs contributed to their effectiveness.

Given that the proposed program has features of graduated driver licensing and that research into the outcome will be ongoing, it is premature to draw the conclusion that it will be useless, but it might be wise to combine the program with some rigorous assessment of different educational strategies. The alternative is to accept the conclusion that all driver education is useless.

**David Henderson**

Clayfield, Qld

[privacy](#)

[terms](#)

© The Australian